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International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General hereby transmits the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in accordance with General Assembly resolution 62/89 of 17 December 2007.

Summary

The present report, prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 62/89, entitled "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010". It follows on from the annual progress report on the Decade, also prepared by UNESCO (see A/62/97). The report presents an overview of the activities carried out by UNESCO and other United Nations entities to promote and implement the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace and contains recommendations thereon.

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I. Introduction

1. In 2007, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) submitted its annual report on its programmes and those of other United Nations entities as regards their adherence to and implementation of the Programme of Action for the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010. In its resolution 62/89, the General Assembly commended UNESCO for recognizing the promotion of a culture of peace as the expression of its fundamental mandate, and encouraged it, as the lead agency for the Decade, to strengthen further the activities it has undertaken for promoting a culture of peace. The Assembly also requested that the Secretary-General submit a report on the implementation of the resolution to it at its sixty-third session. Following the recommendation of the General Assembly, UNESCO adopted a new mission statement at the 34th Session of its General Conference, which states that: "As a specialized agency of the United Nations, UNESCO contributes to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information." This mission statement captures the strategic orientation of UNESCO and drives the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013 (document 34 C/4). One of the five overarching objectives in this Strategy is "promoting cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace". This is then translated into the strategic programme objective "demonstrating the importance of exchange and dialogue among cultures to social cohesion and reconciliation in order to develop a culture of peace", which indicates how UNESCO will pursue sectoral and/or intersectoral action to meet this challenge.

II. Implementation of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace

2. As UNESCO has been tasked with coordinating and directly implementing activities in connection with the International Decade, the present report contains an overview of activities carried out by UNESCO, with the participation of other United Nations entities, Governments and civil society actors. It also contains an overview of activities reported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiREC). Activities are presented in eight sections, corresponding to the eight actions defined in the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

A. Action to foster a culture of peace through education

3. UNESCO has been working to promote quality education as a central vehicle for preparing and instilling the skills and attitudes necessary to defuse and recognize potential conflicts and to actively promote a culture of peace and non-violence, in line with the human rights perspective contained in the Dakar Education for All (EFA) Goals. In that regard, UNESCO has been supporting member States in the

revision of the content of textbooks, learning materials and curricula, taking into account formal and non-formal education, and in teacher training. It has also been providing technical assistance to countries in the application of instruments such as the 1995 Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy. It has been assisting countries in improving and developing national legal frameworks that promote quality education, while also harmonizing and coordinating action at the country level within the framework of the UNESCO National Education Support Strategy, the Global Action Plan and through United Nations system common programming exercises. Activities have been implemented that use information and communications technologies (ICTs) as a tool for expanding access to quality education, particularly for girls and women, the excluded, the poor, the marginalized, and those with special needs in a lifelong learning perspective. Research projects have also been undertaken in collaboration with UNESCO chairs, universities and research institutes on issues related to access, success and quality education. Outstanding examples of activities to promote peace education have also been rewarded and best practices on promoting peace and human rights education, democratic citizenship and intercultural and inclusive education as well as heritage education have been disseminated through the network of UNESCO Associated Schools.

4. The organization has also been providing a platform for intellectual exchanges aimed at promoting dialogue, research, and developing norms and standards. Information-sharing has been supported through the convening of expert meetings to bring together key stakeholders to examine issues related to violence in schools, school-related gender violence, and corporal punishment. UNESCO, in close cooperation with partners such as the International Observatory on Violence in Schools, and the United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Violence Against Children, is continuing to monitor closely how the recommendations outlined in the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children (A/61/299) are being applied. Behaviour-change programmes that target schools in violence-prone communities in countries such as Jamaica are also being piloted, and are using music, drama and multimedia to promote a culture of peace and inspire positive behaviour change in youth.

5. In June 2008, UNESCO carried out an important activity pertaining to youth, which has been identified in the organization's Medium-Term Strategy as a priority group. Focusing on the theme "Youth@thecrossroads: a future without violent radicalization", this category VIII Meeting, organized with Bahrain in Manama, addressed one of the main challenges of our time. It brought together more than 100 representatives of youth groups, the media, academia, policymakers from all regions, as well as observers from some 50 Governments to engage in an unprecedented exchange of experiences and knowledge. Best-practice approaches to tackle violence and radicalization and to prevent youth from descending into extremism were also presented. The two-day conference ended with "The Manama Findings", which sets out a series of lessons and practical approaches in several key areas — foremost among them education and employment — that can be replicated in many countries, and draws on the power of media. UNESCO was urged to continue supporting the exchanges and disseminating information about the various successful initiatives and projects. A dedicated website now provides a database of all projects selected for Bahrain: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=42318&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

6. Information and communications technologies in communities and schools are also being used to promote peace education on issues related to non-violence, tolerance and mutual understanding. For example, UNESCO is employing media in dispute resolution and governance in communities in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago and is working with partners to develop the first fully fledged mobile community multimedia centre that moves across Jamaica to inner-city, rural and otherwise marginalized communities. It offers a range of creative multimedia workshops to people who have never used a computer before and to those who want to increase their skills in using ICT to support their personal and community development while providing an alternative to a life of crime. Female radio reporters are being trained to help prevent violence in countries such as Bolivia and to facilitate awareness campaigns that make legal advice available and encourage victims to report on domestic violence.

7. In 2007, UNICEF launched a global initiative entitled "Getting ready for school: a child-to-child approach", aiming to provide cost-effective school-readiness interventions for children in developing countries. Through the child-to-child approach, children in school are encouraged (often with special kits) to stimulate their younger brothers and sisters at home, thereby developing early learning competencies and enhancing school readiness at the right age. A pilot has been initiated in Bangladesh, China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Tajikistan and Yemen.

8. UNICEF is the lead agency and secretariat for the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), which is designed to narrow the gender gap in primary and secondary education and to ensure that by 2015, all children complete primary schooling, with girls and boys having equal access to all levels of education. Thirty-seven out of 141 countries have a formally recognized UNGEI partnership. Dynamic UNGEI regional partnerships have been providing support to country-level activities and have been in the vanguard on the production and dissemination of knowledge and lessons learned (on empowerment and gender audits of national plans). At the global level, UNGEI has been particularly articulate around the mainstreaming of gender in national education plans.

9. Through the School Fee Abolition Initiative, UNICEF initiated and supported efforts to abolish school fees in 23 countries, predominantly in sub-Saharan Africa, but also in Bangladesh, Haiti, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka and Yemen. This was done through a major conference organized by UNICEF in June 2007 in Bamako, in collaboration with the World Bank and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa. The 23 participating countries developed proposals for a way forward, including technical and financing measures, and identifying capacity-building and research needs. The conference succeeded in deepening and strengthening the policy dialogue on the financial barriers to education access and in furthering school fee abolition within the EFA movement and the Fast-Track Initiative partnership, as a key strategy for accelerating access to education and reaching out to the excluded and marginalized.

10. In Afghanistan, considering the increasing trend of attacks on schools, an innovative strategy to address the issue was developed through the community-based schools initiative, whereby UNICEF focused its efforts in building confidence in community responsibility towards schools. One of the spin-offs of the go-back-to-school campaign in Northern Uganda was being able to increase outreach to

overaged and underaged children and to highlight the needs of children, especially girls, who cannot access secondary education. In Southern Sudan, through the Girls' Education Movement and the go-back-to-school initiative, primary school enrolment dramatically increased. A fast-track teacher training programme, piloted by UNICEF and the Government, improved the quality of the learning environment and the provision of education through a better trained teaching cadre, including in the Darfur region of the Sudan.

11. WHO has been working with countries to strengthen national capacities to prevent violence through policies and programmes that address the underlying causes and risk factors of violence and thereby reduce the frequency of new acts of violence. In August 2007, WHO began a new global mentoring programme for violence and injury prevention, known as MENTOR-VIP, which is designed to "match" a junior injury prevention practitioner with a more experienced expert, so that the former may develop specific skills through structured collaboration.

12. The WHO work in violence prevention capacity development also includes ongoing dissemination and implementation of TEACH-VIP, a modular violence and injury prevention curriculum developed by WHO and a network of global violence and injury prevention experts. This material has been requested by trainers from over 70 countries across all WHO regions, and since mid-2007 the course material was expanded to include the area of disability and rehabilitation. Successful efforts were taken in a number of countries to have the material formally integrated within public health school curricula. It has also been translated into a number of the official languages of the United Nations, and was used in regional trainings. WHO released a new tool in May 2008 to help countries to calculate the costs of violence, which provides a standardized set of recommendations to estimate the direct and indirect economic costs of interpersonal and self-directed violence.

13. UNRWA has been building awareness and capacity among its teachers, head teachers and other personnel in various fields for promoting "safe and stimulating schools" and "child-friendly schools" and eliminating corporal punishment in schools. UNRWA education staff in the Syrian Arab Republic participated in an activity on children's participation in decision-making, while head teachers of Gaza organized a conference on eliminating corporal punishment and promoting non-violence in schools. Summer camps for 250,000 children in Gaza were organized, in which interpersonal communication, teamwork, non-violent approaches to disputes and concepts of tolerance and peaceful conflict resolution were emphasized. Theatre performances on tolerance and peace were implemented for children in UNRWA schools in Jordan, Gaza and the West Bank, while musical troupes have been established in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic to promote the aesthetic values of children and to foster attitudes of love and cooperation. All UNRWA schools celebrated the International Day of Peace with activities facilitating dissemination of a culture of peace and non-violent means of communication.

14. For the fourth consecutive year, UN-LiREC and a consortium of civil society partners lead by Transparencia, were active in organizing "Pasacalles", in which children and youngsters from across Peru came together to promote a "Culture of Peace" and civic values during the National Day Festivities celebrated on 28 July 2007. This nationwide project brought together municipal authorities, school district representatives and students. UN-LiREC activities to promote peace education also

included the co-sponsoring with UNESCO and the United Nations Information Centre-Peru of the second International Peace and Development Education Workshop organized by the Peruvian Institute to Promote Quality Education in October 2007, bringing together community leaders and educators from across the region and contributing to consolidating a network of over 1,200 participants who develop and use peace and development education manuals and other curriculum-related material for children.

B. Action to promote sustainable economic and social development

15. Science and technology are critical drivers for achieving sustainable development, poverty reduction, and contributing to peace and security. UNESCO has been assisting developing countries to enhance their capacity to deal with issues pertaining to environmental sustainability, including the formulation and implementation of policies for environmental management and protection and the use of applied research to address the issues of poverty eradication, climate change, environmental deterioration and natural disasters. UNESCO has already assisted 18 Governments, predominantly in Africa but also in Asia and South-Eastern Europe, in developing national policies in science, technology and innovation. At the 2008 session of the Economic and Social Council, UNESCO hosted an event for policymakers. The scope and potential of these policies were showcased, including examples from Egypt and the United Republic of Tanzania. UNESCO has also been supporting initiatives to enhance access to and strengthen science education at all levels, including through ICTs, and to set up and further develop networks of centres of excellence in the basic and engineering sciences. An example is the Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East Centre (SESAME), which was established under the auspices of UNESCO, and seeks to promote a culture of peace through intergovernmental cooperation in science, and to foster mutual understanding and a spirit of solidarity through cooperation between scientific communities in a region where international efforts are particularly important to ensure the sustainable and peaceful development of the globe. In Nigeria, UNESCO has provided support to the Government for the development of a science education kit that can be scaled nationally and replicated by other countries.

16. To address the issue of climate change, which will likely have significant economic and social consequences and impact peace, security, stability and development in many regions of the world, UNESCO has been assisting member States to build and maintain the requisite knowledge base, and to adopt measures for adapting to the impacts of climate change, contribute to the mitigation of its causes, and strengthen sustainable development. UNESCO, together with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), has been charged with the role as convener for United Nations entities active in the cross-cutting area of science, assessment, monitoring and early warning. UNESCO has also been expected to assume the lead role of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination High-Level Committee for Programmes working group that is dealing with sectoral adaptation strategies in the field of education, particularly in regards to education for sustainable development. Other areas where UNESCO is expected to make a contribution include energy, disaster risk reduction, health, population and human settlements, oceans and water.

17. Cultural industries, and creative industries as a whole, together with cultural tourism, are an important vector for sustainable development and social cohesion. In this regard, UNESCO has been working to ensure that all cultures and their diverse expressions have access to the development opportunities offered by cultural and creative industries and to international markets, while acknowledging the special needs of some cultures and groups that are particularly vulnerable, with special emphasis on actions favouring cultural production, cultural resource management and capacity-building. New partnerships and new cooperation mechanisms have been promoted, in particular in the framework of the Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity, and through South-South and North-South-South triangular cooperation.

18. UNICEF enhanced capacity to better protect children from violence, exploitation, and abuse through the code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism, which was adopted or newly introduced in Albania, Argentina, Canada, Kenya, Mexico, Peru and the Russian Federation. In addition, the number of signatory companies to the code grew to over 600 in some 26 countries. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 889 children working in mines were successfully reintegrated into their communities, and a study on sexual exploitation of children is ongoing.

19. The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, the UNICEF Gender Unit and Education Section, and the Working Group on Girls of the NGO Committee on UNICEF partnered on a side event to the fifty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women entitled "Financing gender equality in education", which brought together experts from the partnership for girls' education and focused on the following key issues: (a) financing education, especially in the context of girls and the constraints faced by girls, from both micro and macro perspectives; (b) the challenges of mobilizing additional resources for girls' education, especially given the potentially potent frameworks of the EFA Fast-Track Initiative and sector-wide approaches; and (c) the concept and relevance of gender responsive budgeting in education.

20. In May 2008, WHO, in collaboration with the Violence Prevention Alliance, published a new guidance document that highlights how the health, psychosocial, and economic consequences of violence impede development. It urges development agencies to pay more attention to, and step up their investment in, violence prevention. The guidance document identifies the gaps — and the many strengths — in the current violence-prevention priorities of development agencies and proposes a strengthened agenda for more effective violence prevention.

C. Action to promote respect for all human rights

21. UNESCO has been working to promote a human rights-based approach to education and to improve both formal and non-formal education systems, targeting a wide range of beneficiaries through: (a) enhancement of policy dialogue to assist member States in ensuring the right to education for every child and in promoting education for human rights, democratic citizenship, peace and non-violence and intercultural education, including establishment of frameworks and guidelines; (b) support to national and local capacities for human rights education, through cooperation in the development of projects and programmes at national and subregional levels, including development of teaching and learning materials;

(c) strengthening partnerships with other United Nations entities for the establishment of a common framework for a human rights-based approach to Education for All in the different regions; and (d) advocacy and networking activities.

22. UNESCO provides a platform for cooperation and partnership among actors committed to this process. In close coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other United Nations system agencies, the organization plays a major role in implementing the World Programme for Human Rights Education, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2004 (resolution 59/113 A), which provides a common framework for action-based human rights education principles. UNESCO supports member States in their efforts to prepare and implement their respective national implementation strategy by providing technical assistance and learning materials.

23. In addition to promoting the enjoyment of all human rights through education and training, UNESCO has been mobilizing all of its partners to join efforts for the advancement of human rights under the motto of the United Nations system-wide commemoration campaign "Dignity and Justice for All of Us" in the lead up to the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It has also supported human rights actions related to advancing academic reflection on the normative content and the obligations of States to respect, protect and fulfil the right to take part in cultural life and the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications and to linking this reflection to policymaking through elaborating recommendations on concrete measures to implement these rights. To reinforce human rights capacities at the regional level, UNESCO supported research projects on human rights, which were implemented by the UNESCO Latin American Research Network of Ombudspersons on economic, social and cultural rights and the UNESCO/Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Arab Research-Policy Network on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The creation of a similar research network uniting a group of Central and Eastern European countries was also supported.

24. UNESCO has also been working in favour of the promotion of the human rights of migrants and their integration in society, and considers that violence against women migrant workers represents an extreme case of human rights violation that must be urgently addressed. The organization recently collaborated with the Eurovision News Exchange Network (ERNO) in South-Eastern Europe for the production of a documentary film on illegal trafficking of girls and women, which investigates the social and cultural contexts of trafficking women in South-Eastern Europe.

25. In response to widespread, persistent violence against the world's children, UNICEF and the Inter-Parliamentary Union developed a handbook for the use of Parliaments and parliamentarians around the globe to aid them in the creation of strategies to protect children, and as an effective follow-up by Parliaments and parliamentarians throughout the world to the recommendations of the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children. UNICEF supported Community-based Child Protection Networks that are responsible for data collection and provision of child protection services at local levels (also known as child protection councils, boards, safeguard committees or ombudspersons), which focus on the provision of legal and administrative services in the area of child

protection. These networks exist in several Latin American countries such as Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Peru. In 2007, national meetings of Child Protection Networks took place throughout Latin America to share experiences and good practices, and the Ibero-American Network of Ombudsman's Offices for Children was created in the framework of the XII Annual Congress of the Ibero-American Ombudsman Federation, held in Lima.

26. As part of its ongoing Global Campaign for Violence Prevention, WHO, in partnership with the Scottish Executive and the Violence Reduction Unit of Scotland, convened the Third Milestones of a Global Campaign for Violence Prevention meeting, in July 2007. Over 200 of the world's leading violence prevention researchers, practitioners and advocates gathered to discuss the theme of "scaling-up" interventions shown to be effective in preventing violence, including, for example, home-visitation programmes to reduce child maltreatment, school-based educational programmes to prevent intimate partner violence, and reducing the demand for and availability of firearms to prevent all types of violence. Ministers of Health of the Americas convened in Mexico in March 2008 to review evidence of the devastating impact of violence and injuries on the peoples of the region and plan their response. The meeting resulted in the adoption of a ministerial declaration, through which ministers pledged their commitment to implementing national plans for the prevention of violence and injury; strengthening prevention programmes that address the root causes of violence, enhancing data-collection efforts; and improving services for victims.

27. In the area of human rights, UNRWA has been very active both in the development and production of materials as well as implementing classroom and school-based activities. Teachers are trained on human rights education through teacher's guides, training packages and workshops and awareness enhanced through a website and a human rights magazine.

28. UNFPA supports communities in bringing about "change from within". This involves drawing on the positive cultural values and resources to promote and further human rights. UNFPA organized four training sessions on culturally sensitive programming for United Nations country teams in Bangladesh, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq and Jordan. This was the first time that United Nations country teams were trained together to link culture, gender and human rights to development programming.

29. UNFPA provided technical assistance to the Governments of Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Rwanda in drafting or revising their laws and policies to improve the lives of women and girls. In Ghana and Zimbabwe, UNFPA assisted national efforts towards the adoption of acts addressing domestic violence. In Indonesia, UNFPA supported the Government and local NGOs in their work in favour of adopting legislation against trafficking of women. UNFPA worked with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to protect the reproductive rights of women and to respond to gender-based violence. In Madagascar, UNFPA played an important role in supporting the Government in the revision of discriminatory laws against women, including those related to marriage. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, UNFPA supported research which examined gender-based violence and how well reproductive rights are addressed in national-level primary health-care facilities.

30. UNFPA partnered with the School of Public Health of Harvard University to finalize a training module to be used worldwide to improve the Fund's capacity to advocate for human rights based reform, which address many areas of the mandate of UNFPA, including: population and development; sexual and reproductive health; and gender equality. Training on this material for UNFPA staff and partners from Africa was held in Ghana. UNFPA joined with UNICEF to develop a package of training and advocacy materials that will assist the staff of both agencies in linking the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women to improve country-level programming for women and girls. The package covers topics such as early marriage, HIV prevention and AIDS treatment, maternal mortality and the human rights of the adolescent girl.

D. Action to ensure equality between women and men

31. In accordance with the new Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013, which designates gender equality as one of two global priorities of the organization, UNESCO has been giving priority to the pursuit of gender equality through action in all of the UNESCO fields of competence by pursuing both gender-specific programming and gender mainstreaming in member States and within the organization. It is committed to supporting women's empowerment, women's rights and gender equality in member States by: (a) mainstreaming gender equality issues throughout the programming cycle at all programme levels; (b) preparing a practical and results-based Priority Gender Equality Action Plan to define the action envisaged by UNESCO in all its fields of competence with concrete results, timelines and budget allocations; (c) building commitment, competence and capacity for gender mainstreaming through dedicated capacity development and resources for these purposes; and in the secretariat: (d) supporting equal career opportunities for staff and appropriate working arrangements to balance work and life; and (e) progressively increasing the representation of women in decision-making levels within the secretariat to reach 50 per cent by 2015. In regards to the Capacity Development and Training Programme in Gender Mainstreaming, four programme sectors have to date received training, as well as a majority of field office staff. Special training and coaching have been provided to the UNESCO Iraq Programme staff based in Amman and staff from the Jordan-Amman office to ensure gender mainstreaming in conflict and post-conflict contexts. A seminar series has also been launched, the UNESCO Forum on Gender Equality, to raise awareness in this field.

32. UNESCO has been promoting women's empowerment, women's rights and gender equality as a priority objective throughout all United Nations joint programmes. It is a lead player in the One Viet Nam Joint Programme on Gender Equality, and promotes gender equality at the country level by integrating gender equality components into all UNESCO country programming documents. The organization participates in 4 of the 13 proposals retained under the Gender Equality Thematic Window of the Spanish Millennium Development Goals Fund. UNESCO collaborates with the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) and is participating in several task forces focused on: gender dimensions of climate change; tracking investments in gender equality in United Nations agencies; and development of a system-wide gender equality action plan. It

is also collaborating with the United Nations Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality.

33. UNESCO strongly supports the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly, by:

(a) Widely distributing the "Passport to Equality", which contains the articles of the Convention, to member States;

(b) Using sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis to reveal how policies impact differently on women and men, but also inviting women to share their own experience;

(c) Forging and strengthening the political will to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, particularly through two new initiatives (the UNESCO and the Sony Ericsson Women's Tennis Association Tour global partnership to further gender equality and promote women's leadership in all spheres of society (the tennis players Venus Williams (United States of America), Tatiana Golovin (France) and Jie Zheng (China) were appointed "Promoters of Gender Equality" under the partnership, which will result in concrete actions in the field, and the Group of Women Ambassadors to UNESCO for Gender Equality, to promote women's empowerment and gender equality both within the organization and in member States);

(d) Promoting women's participation in scientific research through the UNESCO-L'Oréal Partnership for Women in Science.

34. UNESCO also collaborated with 10 other United Nations entities in the drafting of the Interagency Statement on the elimination of female genital mutilation,[1] which was launched on 27 February 2008 at the fifty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

35. The UNFPA strategies to eliminate the practice of female genital mutilation is described in a booklet entitled "A holistic approach to the abandonment of female genital mutilation", which draws on a sampling of UNFPA country-level experiences, that show how carefully targeted and planned interventions can reduce gender-based violence. UNFPA collaborated with UNICEF to establish a Trust Fund to accelerate the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting, which aims to reduce the practice by 40 per cent in 16 countries by 2015. A week-long global technical consultation on female genital mutilation was convened with 70 global experts to discuss the development of a global strategy for the elimination of this harmful traditional practice.

36. Through its leadership role in the IANWGE Task Force on Violence Against Women, UNFPA has been contributing to a United Nations-wide strategy to promote gender equality. At the country level, UNFPA worked in several African countries on awareness-raising campaigns on gender-based violence and supported activities in which youth participated in awareness-raising and prevention efforts. In the Central African Republic, the Fund provided technical assistance to national efforts towards strengthening laws to protect women and girls from gender-based violence.

[1] World Health Organization, *Eliminating female genital mutilation: an inter-agency statement, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCHR, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO* (Geneva, 2008).

E. Action to foster democratic participation

37. UNESCO has been working to instil democratic values in all learners as an integrated component of its work to provide quality education at all educational levels, through both formal and non-formal education. Democratic governance and citizenship participation in developing countries, particularly those in post-conflict situations, has been promoted through the training of journalists and media professionals in non-partisan and independent reporting techniques in conflict areas, supporting the establishment of the necessary conditions for independent media by providing expertise to national authorities seeking to adapt their media legislation to internationally recognized standards of freedom of expression, peace and tolerance, and by assisting media in covering elections. In line with the UNESCO Integrated Strategy on Democracy within the framework of the International Centre for Human Sciences, also known as the Byblos Centre, the organization has been contributing to promoting the human sciences namely through fostering comparative analytical research, organizing international dialogues on the future of democracy and supporting democracy in post-conflict areas.

F. Action to advance understanding, tolerance and solidarity

38. UNESCO has been contributing to peace, mutual understanding and social cohesion through the promotion of a dialogue among civilizations and cultures in accordance with the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and its Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2001 (resolution 56/6). It has been drawing on relevant recommendations of the report of the Alliance of Civilizations and implementing activities that focus on youth, women, civil society, the media, educators and education to avoid discrimination against migrants. To strengthen action in this area, UNESCO has established an intersectoral platform on "Contributing to the dialogue among civilizations and culture and a culture of peace", in order to address this global challenge through an interdisciplinary approach. More information on the specific initiatives of this platform is available in the report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/90 on the "Promotion of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace", submitted to the Assembly at its sixty-third session.

39. UNESCO has been working to advocate the crucial role of culture in international development frameworks, including United Nations system common country programming exercises, and by assisting member States in the formulation, revision and updating of their cultural policies in order to give greater recognition to cultural diversity and dialogue as vehicles of development equity and peace, taking into account the links between cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and sustainable development, with particular attention to the needs defined by the New Partnership for Africa's Development, including gender equality, while reinforcing institutional, including legislative, capacities and those of policymakers and culture professionals.

40. In order to build sustainable bridges for dialogue, UNESCO has been working with its member States to revise textbooks and curricula to help to ensure the removal of hate messages, distortions, prejudice, and negative bias from textbooks and other educational media; and to ensure basic knowledge and understanding of

the world's main cultures, civilizations and religions. It has been promoting the sharing of common values pertaining to specific scientific disciplines in different cultural settings, through such mechanisms as the From Potential Conflict to Cooperation Potential initiative, which facilitates multilevel and interdisciplinary dialogues in order to foster peace, cooperation and development related to the management of shared water resources.

41. Efforts have also been undertaken to assist free, independent and pluralistic media by working with professional journalist associations to prevent conflict and promote mutual understanding, notably through the creation of cross-cultural networks, the development of ethical and professional approaches to reporting, as well as training and awareness-raising of media professionals so as to promote an enabling environment for free self-expression.

42. An Africa-wide regional consultation organized by UNFPA, together with Religions for Peace-South Africa, brought together 60 diverse faith-based representatives from 18 countries to discuss enhancing partnerships between the faith-based communities and the United Nations. Participants agreed on a number of concrete recommendations that will be used by UNFPA to enhance its partnerships and outreach to the faith-based communities, particularly in the areas of HIV/AIDS and violence against women.

43. UNFPA has continued to work with indigenous communities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. In Ecuador, UNFPA supported the development of a national statistics commission for indigenous people. In Bolivia, Guatemala and Panama, UNFPA provided technical assistance to indigenous communities and networks for strengthening access to sexual and reproductive health services.

44. UNICEF joined other United Nations entities at the twenty-first World Scout Jamboree held in Hylands Park, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which brought together 40,000 participants from 150 countries to promote a culture of peace and mutual understanding.

45. The Global Network of Religions for Children — a worldwide network of religious organizations and people of faith, who are united by an urgent concern for the well-being of children everywhere — in cooperation with UNICEF and UNESCO, developed a toolkit on ethics education called *Learning to Live Together*. It provides youth leaders and educators worldwide with the tools for an intercultural and interfaith programme, by which children and young people are able to develop a stronger sense of ethics. *Learning to Live Together* was launched in Hiroshima, Japan, on the occasion of the Third Forum of the Network, in May 2008, which brought together over 1,300 religious leaders of different faiths, grass-roots workers, and decision makers from 60 countries to discuss issues that affect children.

46. UNICEF and the Confederation of African Football united in a joint campaign to harness the power of football during the MTN Africa Cup of Nations, Ghana 2008 — Africa's biggest international football competition. The campaign sought to promote quality education for all of Africa's children. Through a series of public service announcements and other means, popular athletes helped to drive home the message that quality education helps children — especially girls — to stay in school and gain the knowledge and confidence they need to pursue their dreams.

G. Action to support participatory communication and the free flow of information

47. UNESCO has been fostering universal access to information by assisting in the formulation of national information policy frameworks, in particular within the framework of the Information for All Programme; supporting the preservation of analog and digital documentary information through the Memory of the World Programme; establishing policy frameworks and international standards to increase information literacy; monitoring developments and fostering the exchange of best practices with regard to the ethical dimensions of the information society, building on the priorities of the Information for All Programme; fostering international partnerships for enhancing universal access to information; and encouraging the development of knowledge societies.

48. The development of free, independent and pluralistic media has been promoted through the UNESCO International Programme for the Development of Communication; and by building the capacities of media professionals through enhancing the quality of media training institutions; as well as by fostering community access to information to increase opportunities for non-formal education and inclusive participation in development and in management of social transformations. To facilitate community access to information, UNESCO has been supporting community multimedia centres, which combine traditional local media with Internet and digital devices. A total of 130 centres have been introduced in 25 countries. A major regional initiative to take the centres to the national scale completed its first phase in Mali, Mozambique and Senegal with 70 centres.

49. The UNICEF quality education programme in the Maldives ensures an integrated, holistic approach to quality education that includes: (a) infrastructure development to "build back better" the schools that were damaged by the tsunami and to create child-friendly environments for children; (b) capacity-building of teachers and administrators on the importance of child-friendly schools; (c) curriculum revision to incorporate child-friendly approaches; and (d) support to parents to participate in their children's education. Furthermore, the Teaching Resource Centres project has made a virtual learning environment accessible to all teachers of the Maldives and provides them with a consolidated network to communicate and access knowledge.

50. UNICEF has also been supporting observatories on child rights and on child protection that focus on collecting, managing and disseminating data on children, as well as monitoring public policies and expenditure on children. These observatories promote citizen's participation in monitoring child rights and/or public policies targeting children.

H. Action to promote international peace and security

51. In order to promote international peace and security, UNESCO has adopted a regional approach to human security to determine the needs and modalities of action to assist countries in the elaboration of ethical, normative and educational frameworks for the promotion of human security in all regions. In this regard, a number of regional consultations have been undertaken in order to validate the

studies commissioned by UNESCO on the development of these frameworks, which will be the object of a series of publications.

52. UNESCO has also developed an intersectoral platform in order to strengthen its efforts to assist countries in post-conflict and post-disaster situations in all of its programme areas (education, the sciences, culture, communication and information). Assistance has been provided through this platform in the following areas: reconstruction of education systems with the ultimate goal of realizing Education for All; provision of expertise and advice in conflict resolution applied to natural resource management and to the integration of disaster prevention and mitigation efforts, in particular early warning systems in post-conflict and disaster responses; supporting the revitalization of in-country research facilities, policy formulation, implementation and monitoring in the various fields of the natural, social and human sciences; protecting damaged cultural and natural heritage, including emergency consolidation and rehabilitation of damaged cultural heritage sites and institutions as well as the safeguarding of endangered intangible cultural heritage, and promoting the development of institutional and human capacities for the development of sustained free and independent and pluralistic media.

53. UNESCO also works in favour of the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. It is promoting women's involvement in peace and security at the institutional level in post-conflict countries through the establishment of women's research and documentation centres (the first centre was inaugurated in Palestine in January 2006, and a similar centre is being established in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to serve the Great Lakes region in Africa, and a third centre has been proposed for Iraq), and it has been cooperating with the Bethlehem Peace Centre, which endeavours to bring together Palestinian and Israeli women, both Christian and Muslim, to engage in intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

54. To promote international peace and security by furthering efforts to engage multi-stakeholders in the dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, UNESCO consulted with a range of current and potential partners and organizations with a view to building a broad-based and inclusive approach and identifying possibilities for joint action and partnerships. In this context, UNESCO will co-organize an international conference on the theme "Education for intercultural understanding and dialogue", that will be hosted by the Danish Government in Copenhagen in October 2008, as a follow-up to the multi-stakeholder Rabat Conference on Fostering Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations through Concrete and Sustainable Initiatives, held in Rabat in 2005.

55. UNESCO has also pledged to promote dialogue among political leaders in countries of South-Eastern Europe as they work to create a common vision of the future that is based on international cooperation. UNESCO assisted with the organization of a series of regional meetings in Ohrid, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2003), Tirana (2004), Varna, Bulgaria (2005), Opatija, Croatia (2006), Bucharest (June 2007) and Athens (June 2008). In Athens, Heads of States and other leaders from the South-Eastern European region adopted the Athens Declaration, which emphasizes "the role of cultural routes, itineraries and corridors as platforms for regional cooperation and foresees the development of a pool of joint projects on Cultural Water Routes as a means to contribute to stability and peace in the region". This will build upon ongoing work to develop the "cultural

corridors" initiative in South-Eastern Europe, and to promote tangible and intangible heritage in the region as an invaluable asset for development, not only at a cultural level, but also at an economic and social one.

56. UNESCO also participates in, and contributes to, the development of the Secretary-General's counter-terrorism strategy within the framework of the inter-agency counter-terrorism task force. In its resolution 60/288 on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the General Assembly designated a key role for UNESCO in the Plan of Action, which referred to the promotion of dialogue and the prevention of the defamation of religious beliefs as well as to the promotion of a culture of peace, justice and human development through interfaith dialogue among civilizations. As a member of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, UNESCO participated in two retreats of the Task Force and is involved in the working groups on: Preventing and Resolving Conflicts; Addressing Radicalization and Extremism; and Countering Use of the Internet for Terrorist Purposes.

57. The Armed Violence Prevention Programme is a collaborative effort between the United Nations Development Programme and WHO, which seeks to promote effective responses to armed violence through the development of an international policy dialogue founded on a clear understanding of the causes, nature and impacts of armed violence. The first phase of activities was completed during the first half of 2007, which included global normative work as well as country work in Brazil and El Salvador.

III. Role of civil society

58. UNESCO has been encouraging civil society to strengthen its efforts for promoting a culture of peace through the Prize for Peace Education, which was awarded this year to the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (South Africa) "for its outstanding efforts in building sustainable reconciliation through education and in addressing systemic injustice in Africa". The award ceremony will be held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, on 18 September 2008, within the framework of the celebrations of the International Day of Peace. A project to help strengthen a network of active NGOs in conflict prevention and resolution and peace-building in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa was also launched in May 2008.

59. In regards to promoting a culture of peace with youth, UNESCO assisted with the youth sessions that were organized during the first Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations (Madrid, January 2008), and is developing an online portal with resources for young people on the dialogue among civilizations. Five regional youth forums were also organized or co-organized in 2006-2007 on issues related to peace-building and in July 2007, a conference on intercultural, peace and civic education was organized in Wroclaw, Poland, which brought together youth trainers, workers and activists from 28 countries to discuss how to use intercultural, civic and peace education as a tool to create positive change.

60. The UNESCO network of National Commissions has been facilitating the contact and promoting interface between member States and the intellectual and professional communities in each country in order to forge alliances as well as to extend the outreach of UNESCO in each member State, and has significantly contributed to the pursuit of the organization's objectives and the conceptualization,

implementation and delivery of its programmes at the regional, subregional and national levels.

61. UN-Habitat and UNICEF held a peace meeting at United Nations headquarters in Nairobi, in February 2008, to persuade young Kenyans to be ambassadors for peace in their troubled country. Some 700 young people from various parts of Nairobi came together to discuss ways of influencing their peers to avoid violent acts and be ambassadors for peace. UN-Habitat was also one of the major promoters of the National Youth Violence Prevention Week, an activity of the Safer Cities Kenya Project that is a joint collaboration of the Government of Kenya with the United Nations under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Kenya.

62. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, UNFPA has been involved in establishing a first-of-its-kind civil society network which advocates for gender equality and reproductive health for women and young people. In compliance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), UNFPA together with its national partners continued to work on creating community-based initiatives that enable Palestinian women to protect themselves from violence, to access services that deal with these issues, and to build the institutional capacity of local NGOs. A United Nations thematic group on youth was also established under UNFPA leadership, with the aim of strengthening coordination and collaboration among various United Nations entities working for and with Palestinian youth.

63. UNFPA, in cooperation with other United Nations entities and through projects implemented with local NGOs, trained female volunteers and staff on communicating messages related to mitigation of violence against women, and on the provision of psychosocial services, particularly for young women. A coalition of 16 women NGOs to combat violence against women in Gaza was launched, and a network of 27 NGOs was formed to operationalize Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). UNFPA, in partnership with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, also held a national conference on combating gender-based violence.

IV. Communication and networking arrangements

64. In order to raise awareness about the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010), UNESCO distributed the Programme of Action on the Culture of Peace during the third International Salon for Peace Initiatives held in Paris and attended by some 13,000 visitors. Information on contributions to the Decade was also made available through the culture of peace website that was established during the International Year for the Culture of Peace (2000).

V. Conclusions and recommendations

65. **United Nations system agencies, funds and programmes are encouraged to continue focusing their programmes on the various dimensions of the culture of peace, especially at the country level.**

66. **Member States for their part are encouraged to:**

(a) **Increase educational efforts to remove hate messages, distortions, prejudice, and negative bias from textbooks and other educational media, and ensure the basic knowledge and understanding of the world's main cultures, civilizations and religions;**

(b) **Update and revise education and cultural policies to reflect a human rights-based approach, cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and sustainable development;**

(c) **Revise national laws and policies that are discriminatory against women, and adopt legislation that addresses domestic violence, the trafficking of women and girls and gender-based violence;**

(d) **Eliminate the practice of female genital mutilation, including through legal and policy reforms, national capacity-building and working at the community level;**

(e) **Ensure that the gender dimension is integrated into all national development plans;**

(f) **Expand access to information and communications technologies to bring the benefits of all levels and means of education to girls and women, the excluded, the poor, the marginalized and those with special needs.**